Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* I have issued strict instructions in regard to this matter. After this question was raised here last time, I again enquired into the matter and the Protector was specially asked to see that such complaints are not caused and if there is any such thing, I shall deal with very severely.

DEPRESSED CLASSES COLONY—VIJAYARAGHAVAPURAM—THATCHING OF HOUSES

77. Mr. K. R. Viswambharan *(Ezhuvas-Talappalli):* Will the Government be pleased to state.—

(*a*) whether the houses in Vijayaraghavapuram (Depressed Classes Colony) were thatched in 1115;

(*b*) what was the expenditure incurred for the same;

(*c*) whether tenders were called for, for the work; if not, why not;

(*d*) whether the works were checkmeasured in 1115 by the Protector; if so, when; whether he has recorded his satisfaction of the work before payment of the amount?

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):*

(*a*) Yes.

(*b*) Rs. 236—12—0.

(*c*) Tenders were not called for. Since the technical hand was appointed only during the latter part of 1115 and since thatching had to be done before monsoon, the same was done departmentally under orders of Government.

(*d*) Materials for thatching were supplied to colonists and they in their turn thatched their houses. So no checking and recording satisfaction in the Measurement Book were deemed necessary. However, the Protector had inspected the work on paying visit to the colony and found that thatching had been done to satisfaction by the colonists.

I may also add that there was no officer then to supervise and check-measure the works. We wanted a Work Superintendent to check-measure the works. For want of a technical hand this had to be delayed for some time. It took some time to get a proper person selected for this purpose. In the meantime the monsoon also set in. Therefore the Protector was asked to do it, departmentally.

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Mr. K. R. Viswambharan *(Ezhuvas-Talappalli):* Who is the technical officer who does this work now?

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* There is a Work Superintendent transferred from the Engineering Department under the Protector.

Mr. A. L. Antony *(Irinjalakkuda):* May I know, Sir, the total number of such houses?

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* Seventy.

Mr. A. V. Moothedan *(Chalakkudi):* Are all those houses occupied?

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* I think so.

Mr. A. V. Moothedan *(Chalakkudi):* Are there not vacant houses?

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* No.

Mr. C. R. Iyyunni *(Trichur-South):* May I know, whether any estimate was prepared for works to be done?

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* Yes. Only after estimates were prepared, the tenders were called for.

Mr. K. R. Viswambharan *(Ezhuvas-Talappalli):* On a previous occasion, I remember, the hon'ble member made a statement that it is not the policy of the Department to meet the expenses of the thatching and other day to day necessities as far as the colonies are concerned. Is that statement being given effect to in the working of this Department?

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* No. These are for the purchase of materials, etc. We are not going to give anything more than that. This, of course, we will have to do for some time. We won't do anything more.

Mr. K. R. Viswambharan *(Ezhuvas-Talappalli):* Now, a large sum allotted for the depressed class department which ought to have been spent for the acquisition and establishment of new colonies and other necessities is utilised for the purpose of renewal works. The acquisition of new colonies is ignored. We must reduce the expenses in regard to the day to day necessities of the colonies and spend money for the acquisition of new colonies. Now no good is done as it is.

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Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* Government is in entire agreement with the hon'ble member. Our view also is the same. But we could not immediately stop it. We are gradually stopping it.

Mr. A. V. Moothedan *(Chalakkudi):* I find so many houses vacant in certain colonies. What is the meaning in acquiring new colonies when the colonies in existence are not being utilised?

Mr. K. R. Viswambharan *(Ezhuvas-Talappalli):* The present colonies are not inhabited, simply because the sites are not suitable to the labourers. If good sites are acquired, people will come and stay there.

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* There is some force in that argument. Now-a-days, I make personal visits before sanction is accorded for such purposes.

Mr. K. R. Viswambharan *(Ezhuvas-Talappalli):* May I know, Sir, whether any new colonies have been acquired in preference to giving poramboke lands to the depressed classes?

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* Yes. We are acquiring two sites now.

Mr. A. V. Moothedan *(Chalakkudi):* I think, it is better to improve the existing colonies. What is the use of spending money over acquisition of new colonies?

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* Only in rare cases are houses left vacant and it is because the site is not suitable. To have some money and to get some work we are giving isolated houses for these people so that they may not be crowded in a particular place. Conditions are different in urban areas.

Mr. A. V. Moothedan *(Chalakkudi):* May I know, whether non-Hindus are allowed to occupy those houses?

Dr. A. R. Menon *(Minister for Rural Development):* There is a general order issued that nobody other than the depressed class proper should be allowed to occupy any of these houses.

Mr. A. V. Moothedan *(Chalakkudi):* By change of faith, will a man's economic position become better all at once? *(Laughter).*

Mr. President : That does not arise.

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